

POETRY.

[From the "Knickerbocker"]

"The Printer, in some of his folio, heralded the world—Now comes tidings of weddings, makings, wars, fires, inundations, thefts, jubilees, massacres, meteors, comets, speculations, prodigies, shipwrecks, prizes, sea-fights, law-suits, pleas, proclamations, embassies, trophies, triumphs, revels, sports, plays; then again, as in a new-shed scene, treasons, cheating-tricks, robberies, enormous villainies of all kinds, funerals, burials, new discoveries, expeditions; now comical, then tragical matters. To-day we hear of new officers created, to-morrow, of great men deposed, and then again of fresh honors conferred; one is laid to rest and another imprisoned; one purchases, another bankrupt; now plenty, then dearth and famine; one runs, another rides, wrangles, laughs, weeps, and so forth. Thus we daily hear such like, both in public and private news."

"—Old Burton." He stood there alone at that shadowy hour, By the swinging lamp, his kindly burning, All about him save the ticking time, All without, save the night-wind turning, And heavily closed the solemn sound, As slowly he paced or in the ground.

And dark were the mansions so lately that shone, With joy of feasting gleaming, And hearts that were breathing in sympathy then, Were now living it o'er in their dreaming; Yet the Printer still worked at his lonely post, As slowly he gathered his mighty host.

And there lay the merchant all puffed in down, And building bright hopes for the morrow; Nor dreamed he that fate was then weaving a wand, That would bring to him fear and sorrow; Yet the Printer was there in his shadowy room, And he set in his frame-work that rich man's doom!

The young wife was sleeping, whom lately had told The time that death only can sever; And dreaming, she started, yet woke with a smile, For she thought they were parted forever! But the Printer was clicking the types that would tell On the morrow, the truth of that midnight spell!

And there by the statesman, whose feverish brow, And restless, the pillow was pressing, For he felt through the shadowy mist of his dream The latest hopes now passing; Yet the Printer worked on, 'mid silence and gloom, And dug for Ambition its lowliest tomb.

And slowly the Printer kept gathering up His budget of grief and gladness; A wreath for the noble, a grave for the poor, For the happy a cup full of sadness; Strange stories of wonder to enliven the ear, And dark ones of terror to curdle with fear.

Full stature are the tales that dark host shall bear To "Justice and not to the morrow; Oh welcome, thick welcome, to many a heart! To many a heart that the wind and wandering air, For life and its changes are pressed there.

"The Country Middy-Mekker. A friend of mine had remarked for some time in Nottingham, where he lived, a singular-looking woman going to and fro in the streets past his house. She was tall and strong; had the figure and gait of a man; had a strong expressive countenance, full of a strange but original character; in short, was one out of the ordinary class of mortals. "That woman," said he to himself, "is no townswoman. She has grown up in some country-place; she has not only a character, but a history, and I should in the street, she seemed to look hard and searchingly at him, as if to say, 'Who are you now? You don't seem to me just like the rest of these town-folks, who don't care a halfpenny for anybody that isn't dressed up as grand as my lord or my lady.' Perhaps it might be that he looked hard at her. This desire to have a little talk with her increased.

One day he saw her enter a shop, and stepped in too. The tall, strange woman was asking for a pennyworth of red oil. The shopman put it down before her, and she wrapped it in paper. She slowly opened it, and then pushed it back towards him, saying, "Well, now, out that in two." The man very politely did so. She weighed the two pieces in her hand, and giving him one back, said, "Wrop me that up again; I'll take this myself—it's rather the heaviest—'twerf for a neebor."

As she saw my friend smile, she turned towards him, and without any preface, added— "What a thing this self is! It's the last thing that leaves us 't' world!" "That's an honest confession, at least," said my friend. "I think, my good woman, that you were not brought up in this town."

"No, I reckon I warran neebor. You're right there, mister. I'm none o' your finikin townsman. You may see that at a look. I reckon I should mark two of the regular town-grown women. No, I was born and brought up 't' th' country, where there's life and strength 't' th' very air. I wos used from a little ween to run about 't' th' closes; fetch up 't' cows; look after 't' lambs and pigs; ave, and drive 't' plough at a pinch. My fayther was a little farmer, and a hard-working man he war, and made us all work ane. When I wos grown up, my fayther died, and left me up o' th' farm, and I war fool enough to marry."

"Fool enough?" "Aye, fool enough! It's thrif, man; I dunna pretend to deny it. I'm none of your fine, finikin things as is ashamed to say 't' thrif. What's done's done, and cannot be undone—mores 't' pity! But where's 't' use to deny it? Aye, fool war I! But I war only like many o' our besides. That's 't' misfortune o' young men—mind what I say, that's the misfortune o' our lives. We have to take the most important step in our lives, 't' step as requires most sense, just when we've gotten 't' least sense; and so we have to smart for 't. By Leddy, I've smarted enough for my folly. 'Th' young fellow as I married, war a likely enough young chap to look at, but he war good for nowt. He war too fond of sitting 't' th' ale-house nook, and I soon found out that he'd only married me for what he could get. I went on working day after day. I went to 't' plough, to 't' team, fetched up 't' cows, and milked 'em. I war up o' summer mornings by four o'clock, and came home from milking daggled up to 't' knees 't' dew, and there was he hulking 't' bed. By Leddy, I war sit sometimes to go and find a good,ousing bucket o' water on him as he lay. But that warna the worst. Every night he war sure to be 't' th' ale-house; and many and many a time have I had to fetch him away, and pay his shot into 't' bargain."

"Thinks I to mysen, my lad, this wunn'd do for me. I dunna mean then to shurt 't' but o' money my fayther got with such sweat and trouble; no, by Guy! that I dunna! So I threw up 't' farm; sold 't' stock, and come right away to Nottingham."

"And what became of your husband?" "What became of him? He followed me, to be sure—what was he likely to do, a poor dirty rogue? Trust him for running after the money. Aye, he set his nose after it like a ferret. He made hissen sure now of laying hands on 't' some hole or corner o' th' lunshe or other. But I took pretty good care he shouldna."

"Where'd 't' money, wench?" he often said. "Where should it be?" said I, "but gone to pay debts off that a drunken sot like thee sets on?" But it signified nowt—he knew better, and he war always gropin' about high and low, after it. 'Get to work!' said I; 'thou's limbs big enough, and a carcase strong enough—get a spade, or a pick, and do summat for thy bread, as I do. I shall un Manly-mekker.'

"Aye, mister, you may smile. You dunna think I look much like a many-mekker; and 't' allow, said she showing her great hard bony hands, 'but these hands as ha' handled 't' pitchfork, and 't' dung-fork, and held 't' plough, dunna look 't' hikelike 't' th' world to handle a fiddle and thrill. But where there's a will there's a way; and as for me, I can make a tight sort of a gown—aye, I can please three fine town wenchers better than you'd think for."

"But I'm overrunning my story; I took a house, and began many-mekking. That dirty rogue of a husband o' mine was always priggling about 't' house to find out where I'd put the money, but I took care. One day, in walks a man with a book in his hand, and said, 'Missis, I want 't' poor-rates.' 'Poor-rates?' said I. 'By Leddy! thou art come to a wroth house then. I'm a poor woman mysen, man.'

"That may be, said he, 'but you've ta'en a house of five pounds a year, and either you or 't' landlord mun pay the poor-rates.' 'Then let the landlord pay 'em,' said I, 'he's able enough.' 'That's true as 't' gospel, missis,' says 't' man, 'but he wunna!'

"And Ianna?" said I. "But my mum, said he. 'But if a body canna, says I, 'what then?' 'Then,' says he, 'you mun go to 't' workhouse, and other people mun pay to you. That's the way now o' days; all pay as long as they can, even when the children are crying upon the door-sill for a roasted potato; and when they can pay no longer, they turn 'em out, and so to 't' workhouse.'

"Mon, said I, for I had been coming him o'er as he war talking at hissen, and I need as plain as a pike-staff, that 't' fellow, spite of his trade, war an honest sort o' chap." Mon, said I, 'canst tell me where to put a bit o' money out safe?' 'Well,' said he, giving me a queer sort of look, as much as to say, 'I thought you said you'd got none,—maybe I could do that too.'

"Then do!" said I, getting a chair, and retching up to 't' top of an old cupboard—'do; for here I've gotten the plague of my life,—a bit of money in an old stocking, and it keeps me in a continual fever; for that dirty rogue of a husband o' mine is always priggling after it, and one of these days he'll get hold on't, and then I'm ruined for ever.'

"No down I brings 't' owd stocking, and holding it open afore 't' man—'There,' says I, 'there's just four hundred gowden guineas there.' 'Well, that I look up to him, and my eyes 't' him, but the man did stare! 'of such a sight, said he, 'that's a sight good 't' me!'

"I am afraid," said my friend, "you were not very prudent though, to show such a sum thus to a stranger." "Prudent, warrn't I? Dost to think then, mon, that I've got no white in my eye? Yaw, I know an honest man from a rogue when I see him. The man was as good as his word. He took me to a gentleman that gave me good security for my money, and I got my interest to this day. Many's the time that dirty rogue of a husband o' mine has hunted the house over for 't' money. Nation! how he wonders what's gotten it! I can always tell when he's bin after it. I find everything turned topsy-turvy 't' drawers and everywhere. But I'll take care that he neves comes at it, a dirty rogue, him."

"Well," said my friend, "you certainly have little comfort in him." "Comfort! no! my comfort lies in a different quarter. I look for very little comfort 't' this world; but, thank God, there is a comfort, even here, and that's in religion! 'We're all poor creatures! I found my business flourish; money came in; and yet I wasna somewhat right. Everything seemed so cowed and hollow. I war always sigling and malanely 't' th' midst o' plenty. My husband's goings on made me half mad. Night after night I had to fetch him home from the pot-house. One day, however, comes a nice young woman to have a gown made, and she says to me—'Missis, do you ever go to a place o' worship?' 'No,' said I, 'I'm an atheist, and I say I dunna.' To say 't' truth, I dunna richly know where he goes to. 'Thou sees, I'm a stranger here, and I dunna like to go amongst folks as I dunna know."

"Ah!" said 't' young woman, 'I wish you would go with me on Sunday to the Methodist's Chapel; I think you'd be pleased; and perhaps you'd find a comfort you little dream of. On Sunday, oh! there is a nice man coming from Lunnion, they cawn him, Robert Newton.'

"Well," says I, 'as thou says so much, and axes me so kindly, I dunna mind if I do. I'm sorely in want of summat; and I think it's because I dunna seek religion.' While clearing away forests and making a road by which Civilization may take her march through the country, we have produced the above facts, and a great many more of a like kind, which we may hereafter lay before our readers.

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Aw! I goes back, thinking then what gladness I should have. But I was mistaken. The devil seemed like a raging good-fire. He war at me aw the way home. He seemed to drive me up 't' street like a great wind. 'Well,' said he, 'and what better art thou now? Art a any fuller, or any fatter; any richer or any better?' Oh! what a nasty devil it is! Well, well, I mun hear my trials and my temptations, I reckon. And that's what that dirty rogue of a husband o' mine is always telling me, and it's true, but I know why he tells me that,—it's because he wants to find 't' owd stocking-full o' guineas. But I'll tak precious good care that he does na. Oh! what a dirty rogue he's bin to me,—he has driven me to God!

With this the old dame turned to march out, nodding significantly to my friend, but stopping suddenly, she looked at two half-penny-worths of red oil which she held in her hand, and said, as to herself, 'Let me see, which is which? Aye, this is for my mosen, it's the biggest—'twerf for a neebor!'

quake, and 't' lights and everything spin round wi' me. As we went home, 't' young woman asked me how I liked it? "Oh," said I, 'I never was so sad and never so well in all my days. But I want a siner I've bin! Oh! what must I do to be saved?'

"Thank God! thank God!" said 't' young woman. 'You are in the right way now, and if you only go on it will be a blessed day for you, and for me too, you came to the chapel.' And now, aw my comfort 't' religion. I go regularly to chapel. I'm in a class, and all the society is very kind to me. But dunna think that I've had nothing but swimming work of it. No, the devil came after me like a roaring lion, and oh! what a nasty devil it is!

"One day a young woman brought a gown-piece for me to make up. It was a very fine, rich, valuable gown-piece indeed; and when I came to measure it, then I found that there was a yard and a half of the stuff too much; and such good stuff too!"

"'T'ak it! 't'ak it!" says the devil, 'they'll never know!'

But the Lord said in my heart, 'Dunna tak it, woman, it's none o' thine!'

"'T'ak it alone!' says 't' Lord. 'Oh! I warrn't the worst o' the lot; till at last I ups and rolls the piece together, and off to 't' young woman, and flinging it down, say—'There! there's that too much!'

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It is amazing the worst of the day, that we have, in the United States, no national feeling, no genuine love of country. The traveler in other lands finds everywhere the institutions and productions of a people prized by themselves, though they may be condemned by strangers. Here the order is changed. If any work in literature, art, or science, is written by an American, it is set down by a mob of gentlemen, who talk about such matters, as altogether worthless, or as undeserving a favorable regard only on account of its resemblance to something foreign. We receive a few facts, admitted by all the world abroad, for the benefit of this sort of people.

Impressus! The greatest man, "take him for all in all," of the last hundred years, was George Washington, an American.

The greatest metaphysician was Jonathan Edwards, an American.